

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NWES

LEVEL
ONE

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No. 36

April 1, 1954

NCC HOLDS 7TH ANNUAL MEETING

Ninety-one of the Protestant Christians in Japan belong to denominations cooperating in the NCC, according to a report issued at the 7th annual NCC meeting. The meeting which was held from March 23-25 in Tokyo was attended by 100 regular members and 50 associate members. Other details of the report show a total of 62 protestant denominations in Japan, of which 5 cooperate in the NCC (the United Church, whose missionaries represent 8 denominations is counted as a single group). The total number of Protestant Christians is 218,556. There are about 185,284 Roman Catholics in Japan. The population of Japan is about 87 million. A summary of the report follows:

	NCC cooperating groups	others	total
Churches	1,548	690	2,238
Preaching Stations	457	490	947
Japanese Pastors	2,273	151	2,424
Missionaries	549	400	949
Membership	198,571	19,985	218,556

Approval for AVACO apply to become a Zaidan Hojin (Foundation Legal Person) was granted by the meeting. Since AVACO will become a property holder with the construction of its new building, it is necessary under Japanese law for it to be a legal person. The form of Zaidan Hojin was chosen rather than that of Shukyo Hojin (religious legal person) because AVACO is composed of a council rather than a group of members. A membership is necessary for becoming a Shukyo Hojin.

The Council of Evangelism for the Blind was accepted as an associate member of the NCC and will cooperate with it from now on in that capacity.

The 1954 Budget was approved as follows: Administration ¥3,540,000; Public Relations ¥480,000; Family Life ¥860,000; AVACO ¥4,080,000 (including administration, Filmstrips etc.) AVACO--Radio Dept. ¥4,320,000; Christian Literature ¥13,120,000; Church School ¥3,243,825. About 20% of the Budget is raised in Japan.

STATEMENT ON THE BIKINI QUESTION

A statement on the Bikini question (the poisoning of a number of Japanese fishing boats and their crews by radioactive dust from the recent H-Bomb explosion) was prepared by the International Affairs Commission, at the request of the Meeting. Kensuke Horinouchi, former ambassador to the US is chairman of the commission. Other members include Soichi Saito, YMCA General Secretary, Tokutaro Kitamura, a member of the Council of the Progressive Party; Komakichi Matsuoka, R. Social Democratic party; Yoshimune Abe, Chairman of the Christian Peace Association of Japan. The Japanese people are very concerned with effect of the bomb tests on their fishing industry as a whole as well as with the fate of the men who were directly injured this time. The Diet has passed a resolution favoring control of Atomic Power by an International Organization, and has sent this to the United Nations. The NCC Statement is as follows:

RESOLUTION WITH REGARD TO THE ATOMIC POWER

The American test explosion of the Hydrogen bomb at Bikini Lagoon on March 1, 1954, unfortunately caused a serious disaster among our Japanese fishers, some being exposed to the perils of life, and practically being deprived of the life-line of their fishery rights, which brought about some economical and psychological uneasiness among our general public, and threatens to affect the life of the nation.

We earnestly desire that such a tragic affair will never happen again and we humbly request that all the Authorities concerned will consider this serious situation and take proper measures to deal with this urgent problem.

Meanwhile, we wish to call the attention of the American Christian Churches, through the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.; earnestly requesting their cooperation in helping to promote the realization of the International control of the Atomic powers, and to see that they should be utilized exclusively for peaceful measures, in order to contribute to the welfare of all the nations of the world.

Along with this, we would also desire to enlist the cooperation of our fellow Christians all over the world, with regard to the solution of this most urgent problem, approaching them through the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, which is the joint organ of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

(Adopted by the Seventh General Assembly of the National Christian Council of Japan, convened in Tokyo on March 23-25, 1954)

THE CENTENARY MOVEMENT

Kagawa reported on the first 6 months of his Centenary Campaign (Sept. to Feb.) to the Centenary Movement Conference which met on March 24. He held 179 meetings, attended by 82,940, and received 17,261

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decision cards. His goal for the next 5 years till the centennial is 300,000 decision cards. He pointed out the correlation between high crime rate in areas where there is little Christianity (for example: Kochi Ken which has a crime rate of 4% of the population) and a low crime rate in areas which are relatively Christianized. The best example of the latter is Shiga Ken, in which the Omi Brotherhood is working, which has a crime rate of .9%.

Dr. Emil Brunner, and Dr. Kagawa both addressed a huge public meeting of 2800 at Kyoritsu Hall on the evening of March 24. A cash offering of 95,520 yen was collected. Kagawa spoke on the topic "Revive the Conscience of Japan with God". Brunner spoke on the Evanston topic, Christ the Hope of the World. He pointed out that although man cannot live without hope, we are now in an age when man has found his fondest hopes for "World Progress" or "Personal immortality" destroyed by the events of recent years. We approach again the state of mind which was prevalent before the advent of Jesus--for the World of antiquity was also a world without hope. In these circumstances, Jesus Christ stands out as the one certain hope of the world. Jesus remains a hope in spite of anything which happened to society because he is the truth he proclaims are not a product of men's imagination, but are a revelation from God, the creator, himself. Therefore they are independent of temporal events, and the future is one of hope and certainty for those who believe in Jesus.

Brunner continued his explanation of the meaning of Christ, the Hope of the World by saying that Jesus is not merely the bringer of the Revelation of God but the content of it. He is both true God and true Man, and he reveals that the true man and the true God belong together. Although man is created in the image of God, this image in ordinary man is distorted by ego and sin, and it is only when we look at Jesus that we see man as he ought to be. The very essence of God's nature is love, and we are created by and for this love. Since Love is the true goal of humanity, the true goal of humanity is society--communion, fellowship, friendship. This is the Kingdom of God which was revealed by Jesus.

Communism, Brunner pointed out, and all other social utopias arise from this desire of man for a Kingdom of love and justice, and to this extent contain a germ of truth. They are a perversion of the "communion" of Christianity. Those who believe in Jesus have already experienced as a reality the eternal love of God. They experience the Kingdom of God in 2 ways: as that which they have now, and as the great Hope which will come with the totality of their life. God wants every man to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth, but just as Jesus rose to the eternal world only through the cross, so humanity must go through catastrophe to the eternal goal. But there is Hope for those who look at the goal and not the catastrophe. Although the idea of judgment is involved in the coming Kingdom, we are not allowed to "condemn" anybody, we are enjoined by God to believe and hope for everybody. This very hope for everybody can be a powerful force for good in the world. As we do this we must thank God who has reborn us to a new Hope through the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE BECOMES NCC DEPARTMENT

The Japan International Christian Service Committee became the Department of Christian Service of the NCC at the NCC annual meeting. The Committee is the representative agency in Japan for the Central Department of Church World Service of the NCCC-USA, and the World Council of Churches Dept. of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees. The Committee is composed of representative from the Japanese churches and missionaries related to the NCC.

The Committee distributed relief supplies from overseas to both Christians and others in need regardless of race or religion. The distribution is done through the National Council of Social Welfare, the Prefectural Ministries of Welfare, and through Christian churches. They also arrange sponsors in Japan for stateless refugees from China, and maintain a rehabilitation program for the physically-handicapped.

It was felt advisable for the Committee to work under the NCC so that the relief and rehabilitation would be carried on not in the name of a foreign organization, but in the name of the world Christian community operating within that part of the community which is in Japan: the Christian churches of Japan. In this way, a united witness will be given through local relief committees, recognized by the churches, but coordinated and administered by a central relief committee under the NCC.

KYODAN-RELATED MISSIONARIES GATHER FOR FELLOWSHIP AND INSPIRATION

Climax of the three-day conference of fellowship and inspiration held by missionaries related with the United Church of Christ in Japan was the celebration of Holy Communion by the 400 Protestant missionaries on Friday morning, April 2. This service followed the closing lecture by Dr. Emil Brunner, internationally known theologian, who was principal speaker and resource leader at the meeting held in Hakone-Yumoto near Tokyo.

Throughout the conference, Dr. Brunner lectured and discussed with the missionaries topics relating to the Church and Christian evangelism in the various fields of missionary work represented by the body. Dr. Brunner's emphasis was upon the need of the Christian church "to become a real ecclesia in which God is active in the hearts of man."

Dr. Michio Aozaki, moderator of the United Church, in delivering the opening address of the conference on Tuesday evening, March 30, stressed that unless the Christian church becomes strong there is no hope for a good political and economic life within Japan. To attain this strength he asked for the cooperation of the missionaries who are working with the United Church.

Thursday evening the Christian workers shared their experiences through a service of witness and testimony led by Rev. Alfred Stone. Wednesday evening was given over to an evening of fun through a stunt night program.

Rev. Donald Clugston was elected chairman and Miss Gertrude Feely, secretary, of the 1955 conference to be held March 29-April 1, 1955.

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YOUTH COMMITTEE OF UNITED CHURCH AND MISSIONARIES MEET

Thirteen pastors and laymen from the United Church of Japan central youth committee and the NCC youth committee met with forty missionaries of the United Church representing different areas of Japan on April 2 and 3 at Hakone-Yumoto near Tokyo following the IBC-Kyodan related missionary conference.

Purpose of the gathering was to seek means of coordinating the youth program of the church and the work of the missionaries.

Problems of materials, leadership training and organizational technics were discussed by the group as well as the desires of the youth committee and the missionaries relative to the position of the missionaries in the total youth program. Findings of the group will be studied by the youth committee.

COPIES OF "TOGETHER TO BE HIS WITNESSES" AVAILABLE

The Study pamphlet for the Evanston Conference "Together to be His Witnesses" is now available for 50 yen from the NCC office. Only 100 copies of the English are available, and orders will be filled as they are received. The chapter titles are as follows: The Evanston Assembly, II Christian Faith and Christian Hope, III One in Christ, yet Divided, IV An Evangelizing Church, V The Responsible Society, VI The Christian Responsibility for International order, VII The Church amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions VIII The Christian in His Vocation, IX The World Council and the Churches, X Signs that Men may see.

